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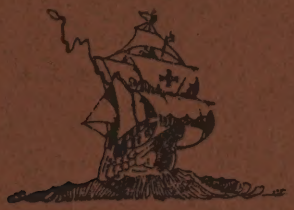
The First Landing Place of Juan Ponce de Leon

On The North American Continent In The Year 1513



Part of Frontispiece to Second Decade of Herrera's General History of the Indies showing portrait of "The Adelantado Juan Ponce of the Kingdom of León, Discoverer of Florida" and his three ships in a harbor with the title "Juan Ponce fights with those of Florida."

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PUBLISHED BY WALTER B. FRASER
ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA
1956

The First Landing Place of Juan Ponce de Leon

on the North American Continent in the Year 1513

THE DISCOVERY

The only known description of this voyage of Juan Ponce de León, which gives a day by day account, is that in the *Historia General de Los Hechos de Los Castellanos en Las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Oceano,* [General History of the Acts of the Castilians in the Islands and Mainland of the Ocean Sea] by Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, first published in Madrid, Spain, in 1601.

The part of the Herrera account essential to determination of Ponce de León's first landing place is as follows: ". . . the second of April, sailing West-northwest, the water went diminishing to nine fathoms, at one league from land, which was in thirty degrees and eight minutes, they ran along the coast seeking harbor, and that night they anchored close to land, in eight fathoms of water. And thinking this land was an island, they called it Florida . . . He [Ponce de León] went on shore to take information and possession. Friday the eighth they set sail . . ."[1]

IMPORTANT POINTS

A. The coast was sighted on April 2nd.

B. The latitude 30°-08′ given by Herrera was not the landing place. It was a position one Spanish league (3.43 nautical miles) from the coast.

C. The ships left the position at which this latitude observation was taken, "seeking harbor." The direction sailed is not given.

D. The ships were anchored "that night" in eight fathoms of water, "close to land."

E. Ponce de León landed on April 3, 1513.

F. He landed to "take information and possession."

G. They remained at the landing place from April 3rd to April 8th.

1. Decade I, Libro IX, folio 302 (312). Spanish text: ". . . dos de Abril, cortiendo a Luesnorueste, yendo disminuvendo el agua hasta nueue braças, a vna legua de tierra, que estaua en treynta grados y ocho minutos, corrieron por luengo de costa, buscando puerto, y la noche surgieron cerca de tierra, a ocho braças de agua. Y pensando que esta tierra era isla, la llamaron la Florida . . . Salio a tierra a tomar lengua, y possession. Viernes a ocho hizieron vela. . . ."

THE LATITUDE

For a correct determination of a latitude, by observation of the Sun, as practiced in Ponce de León's time, it was necessary not only to measure the angle of the Sun's height, but also to have a table giving the Sun's declination (its angular distance north or south of the Equator), for that particular day. The Regiomontanus table, in use at that time, was not correct. The error in this table, for April 2, 1513, has been calculated.[2] By correction of this error the actual position of Ponce de León's ships is shown to be at latitude 29°-59′. This is five nautical miles north of St. Augustine Inlet. The Inlet, and St. Augustine Harbor would be in plain sight of a look-out in the "crow's nest" of Ponce de León's ship.

THE HARBOR

Ponce de León's ships ran "along the coast seeking harbor." Not finding the channel that afternoon, they anchored, for the night, close to land.

2. Calculation made by Captain William J. Peters, Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution of Washington, March 6, 1939. Copy of Captain Peters' report in possession of Walter B. Fraser.

Part of Map 127, British Crown Collection; showing Bara de la Florida as entrance to St. Augustine Harbor.

CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF TERRESTRIAL MAGNETISM

5241 BROAD BRANCH ROAD N. W.
WASHINGTON D. C.

March 15, 1939 (No. C-1)

Mr. E. W. Lawson,
P.O. Box 111,
St. Augustine, Florida

Dear Mr. Lawson:

Complying with Mr. Peters' request of March 13, please find enclosed the first typed copy and one carbon copy of his report dated March 6 on examination of your manuscript entitled "First voyage of Juan Ponce de Leon, etc."

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours

John A. Fleming, Director

Photostatic copy of letter from John A. Fleming, Director, Carnegie Institute of Washington, transmitting Mr. Peters' Report. Pages 5 and 6 of this report are reproduced here. Page 5 contains the calculation of the error in the REGIOMONTANUS KALENDARIUS. *Page 6 gives the references consulted by Mr. Peters in making this calculation.*

Calculation of Sun's declination at noon, Saturday, April 2, 1513
(Approximate longitude, 81° west and GMT $5^h\ 24^m$ after noon)

A--Using Newcomb's Tables of the Sun [5], compute T and arguments M, L, and N.

$T = \frac{1513 - 1900}{100} = -3.87$ $\qquad T^2 = +15$

$0.003T^2 = +0.04$

$T - 0.003T^2 = -3.91$

	M		L	N
			° ' "	
Table I, 1500	16.86		+ 9 44 16	3476
Table II, 1913	3.45		0 42 13	54
Table III, April 2	92.		9 30 46	92
Table IV, $5^h\ 24^m$	0.22		13 18	
Table V (term in T^2)	0.00		16	
Totals	112.53	L =	20 10 49	N = 3622
Period of argument	0.00	Table XVI [×(-3.91)]	+ 1 04	
M	112.53	Table XVII	+ 1 50 17	
		Constant	48	
		Sun's longitude ☉	22 02 58	

Obliquity	° ' "
Table I, 1500	+ 0 03 07
Table II, 1913	+23 27 02
(a) × 0.13	00
$\delta\varepsilon$(3622)	09
ε	23 30 00

log sin ☉	9.5742
log sin ε	9.6007
log sin δ	9.1749

Declination δ + 8° 36'

B--Using Regiomontanus [3]

	° '	
For year 1513	1 04	From Tab. Radicés Solis
For April 2	22 03	From calendar
Deduct 1° for common year	- 1 00	According to precepts
Change for longitude*	15	
Sun's longitude ☉	22 22	log sin ☉ 9.5804
Obliquity** ε	23 34	log sin ε 9.6019
		log sin δ 9.1823

Declination δ + 8° 45'

The error in declination is 9' and as Regiomontanus' value is larger than Newcomb's, the latitude deduced, namely, 30° 08', is too large by this amount due to errors in the ephemeris only.

---

*Longitude taken slightly larger than 81° west.

**See [6], T. III, p. 6.

Delanbre [6] gives an example of the calculation of the Sun's longitude from the tables of Alphonso for the date September 20, 1746, and remarks: "La longitude moyenne d'Alphonso est de 4' moindre que celle de nos tables; l'équation est plus forte de 12', en sorte que la longitude différerait ici de 16'; maiselle différerait que de 8' dans le point opposé." These tables are carried out to seconds whereas the Regiomontanus are to minutes. If any consideration is to be given these latitude-errors, the declination should also be computed by the Alphonso tables. The two editions of Regiomontanus covering overlapping periods give identical results. They also give the dominical letter and church days.

It should be noted that the error produced in the declination by the error of the ephemeris is not constant and may be positive or negative depending upon the time of the year.

References

[1] Delambre, Astronomie, T. III, pp. 697-711, for calendar (in library of Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Washington, D. C.).
[2] Alphonso of Castille Tables (in library of Georgetown University).
[3] Regiomontanus, Kalendarius cum nero motu solis, etc., for period 1502 to 1551 (in Rare Book Room, Library of Congress).
[4] Regiomontanus, 14xx? to 1515 (in library of Georgetown University).
[5] Newcomb's Tables of the Sun (Office of Nautical Almanac, Naval Observatory; copy in Library of Department of Terrestrial Magnetism).
[6] Delambre, History of astronomy, T. III, pp. 6, 246, 249, 327, etc. (in library of Georgetown University).

The following should be consulted also:

J. K. Wright, Notes on latitude and longitude of Middle Ages (in Library of Congress).
Edmund Farwell Slafter, History and causes of incorrect latitudes, etc., reprint from New England Historical and Genealogical Register, April 1882 (in Library of Congress but not on shelves during W. J. Peters' visits).
S. Newcomb, Sidelights on astronomy (in Library of Congress but not on shelves during W. J. Peters' ~~mixtx~~ visits).
See "Ephemerides" in catalogue of printed books published by British Museum (London, 1887-1902, etc.).

(Signed) William J. Peters

Washington, D. C.,
March 6, 1939

		KL. APRILIS.	SOLIS ARIES.		LVNAE S.G		S.G.	
1	g		21	4	3	29	3	19
2	A	4 noñ	22	3	4	12	4	2
3	b	3 noñ	23	1	4	25	4	15
4	c	2 noñ Ambrosij archiepiscopi	23	59	5	9	4	28
5	d	Noñ	24	58	5	22	5	11
6	e	8 idꝰ	25	56	6	5	5	24
7	f	7 idꝰ	26	54	6	18	6	7
8	g	6 idꝰ Marię ęg; ptiacę	27	52	7	1	6	20
9	A	5 idꝰ	28	50	7	14	7	3
10	b	4 idꝰ	29	48	7	28	7	16
11	c	3 idꝰ TAVRVS	0	47	8	11	8	0
12	d	2 idꝰ	1	45	8	24	8	13
13	e	Idus	2	43	9	7	8	26
14	f	18 kaſ Maij. Tyburtij & Valeriani	3	41	9	20	9	9
15	g	17 kaſ Clauis rogationū	4	38	10	4	9	22
16	A	16 kaſ	5	36	10	17	10	5
17	b	15 kaſ	6	34	11	0	10	18
18	c	14 kaſ	7	32	11	13	11	1
19	d	13 kaſ	8	30	11	26	11	14
20	e	12 kaſ	9	28	0	9	11	27
21	f	11 kaſ	10	25	0	23	0	10
22	g	10 kaſ	11	23	1	6	0	23
23	A	9 kaſ Georgij martyris	12	21	1	19	1	6
24	b	8 kaſ	13	18	2	2	1	19
25	c	7 kaſ Marci euangelistę	14	16	2	15	2	2
26	d	6 kaſ	15	14	2	28	2	16
27	e	5 kaſ	16	11	3	12	2	29
28	f	4 kaſ Vitalis martyris	17	8	3	25	3	12
29	g	3 kaſ Clauis pentecostes	18	6	4	8	3	25
30	A	2 kaſ	19	4	4	21	4	8

REPRODUCTION OF PAGE FROM REGIOMONTANUS KALENDARIUS

The calendars known to be in existence in 1513 were the Alfonso of Castile Tables and the Regiomontanus Kalendarius. Correction of the Alfonso of Castile Tables was undertaken by Regiomontanus in 1452. The first edition of the Regiomontanus Kalendarius was published in 1474. The above reproduction is from a copy in the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

THE NAMING

The name "La Florida" was given on April second, before the landing was made. This name was used by Spaniards for many years to designate the present St. Augustine Inlet.[3] "La Florida" was used as a name for St. Augustine as late as 1659.[4]

THE TIME

Ponce de León's ships remained at "La Florida" from April second to April eighth. They must have been brought into the harbor. To leave them "close to land" where the first strong wind would drive them ashore and wreck them would be too dangerous.

After landing, on April 3rd, Ponce de León would have ample time to get information, take possession and install a landmark.

THE INDIAN VILLAGE AND SPRING

The place to which Ponce de León would naturally go to get information would be the nearest Indian village. Archaeological investigations show that Indians occupied Fountain of Youth Memorial grounds as early as 1,000 years before Christ. There are many historical records of Indians continually occupying this site from the 16th to the 18th centuries.

The reason for this long occupancy of this site by the natives is the availability of an adequate supply of drinking water. There is no other spring in this vicinity.[5]

This spring was known as Fountain of Youth for many years prior to the purchase of the property by the present owner. In a registration book kept at the spring from 1929 to 1936, fifty-five

3. Map 127, British Crown Collection: "Ba. de la Florida." Also map in Dau, *Florida Old and New.*

4. Chatelain, *The Defenses of Spanish Florida*, p. 123, n. 12. "["de la florida," a term sometimes used to refer St. Augustine]."

5. Fraser vs. Curtis Publishing Co., U.S. District Court No. 1730-J-Civil:
Deposition of Dr. Matthew W. Stirling, August 9, 1951, p. 16: "The most probable reason is that they found it a convenient location for securing food and water . . . They could get fresh water to drink . . ."

Deposition of Dr. Verne E. Chatelain, October 8, 1951, p. 6: "The historical evidence and the very fact that the village remains show a large habitation there, indicate that there was ample spring water at the place. Actually I know of only one spring still remaining in that village site and that is in the Fountain of Youth Grounds, called the Fountain of Youth Spring."

persons wrote that they had previously visited the Fountain of Youth between the years 1868 and 1899.

On April 13, 1934, workmen digging holes in which to plant orange trees, a short distance south of the spring, uncovered human bones. Realizing the importance of this "find," Mr. Fraser notified the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, D. C., and Dr. Matthew W. Stirling, Director of its Bureau of Ethnology, came to St. Augustine to examine the site and evaluate it. Dr. Stirling has stated that he considers it one of the most important archaeological finds in the Southeast.

INDIAN BURIAL GROUND AT FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Reproduced from a photograph showing a small part of the Indian skeletons uncovered in 1934.

On recommendation of Dr. Stirling, Mr. J. Ray Dickson was engaged to make further explorations. An area forty by eighty feet was staked off. In less than half of that area over one hundred Indian skeletons were uncovered, showing both pre-historic and Christian Indian burials. In his report Mr. Dickson wrote: "I think I am correct in the statement that nowhere else in the

United States is there an Indian burial ground such as I have exposed here at the Fountain of Youth, that is, where the burials show Christian influence . . . The site, I feel, is most important, is proving of great interest to Florida, and should prove of unlimited value to the nation.

"I have been doing Archaeological work for the past seven years for the University of Chicago, with men who are now with the Smithsonian, and for the Dickson Mound Museum at Lewistown, Illinois, and this site is the most interesting one I have ever seen."[6] Additional extensive investigations made from 1950 to 1955, under supervision of the Department of Sociology and Archaeology of the University of Florida, resulted in the finding of many more Indian skeletons and of finding of fragments of pottery, and other artifacts, which show Indian occupation of this site extending back to at least the year 1000 B. C.

THE CROSS

On July 4, 1868, H. H. Williams purchased a tract of land in which were included three small Spanish grants (the Fountain of Youth Memorial grounds) made to Agustus Santana, Juan Gónzales Montes de Oca and Tomas Andreu in 1790.[7]

In cleaning up this land, Williams came upon a cross composed of coquina stones, buried in the ground near the Fountain of Youth Spring. Thinking this cross might have relation to the landing of Ponce de León, Williams went to a library then owned by Mrs. Francis Wilson (the present St. Augustine Free Public Library), where he was erroneously informed that coquina had not been discovered until 1580.[8] As a result of this discouraging information, Williams covered the cross and filled up the spring.

COQUINA

Coquina stone is a natural shell-stone formation found exposed on the ocean beach in the vicinity of St. Augustine and as far south as Jupiter Inlet. It is also found as a slightly covered strata for a considerable distance inland. There is competent authority for

6. Report of J. Ray Dickson in Walter B. Fraser collection.

7. Purchase by Williams shown by abstract of title in possession of Walter B. Fraser. *Spanish Land Grants in Florida* Vol. II, pp. 36-37.

8. *The St. Augustine Evening Record*, April 19, 1909.

the statement that the Indians knew of the existence of this stone before the coming of the white man.[9]

That coquina was plainly visible at St. Augustine Inlet as late as 1764 is shown by the description written by the Frenchman, Jacques Nicolas Bellin, in that year, to accompany his map of St. Augustine Harbor, from which the following quotation is taken: "The entrance is covered outside by sand banks and rocks which set out more than a third of a league, among which there are some openings of passages which form some channels to gain the interior of the harbor; . . . This passage is easy to recognize; one sees, on the north and south banks, the sea break against the rocks which very clearly mark the passage . . ."[10]

THE ERROR ABOUT COQUINA

The often published, but erroneous, statement that coquina stone was not discovered until 1580 stems from a letter written on December 27, 1583, by Pedro Menéndez Marquéz, then Governor of Florida, in which he states: "About three years since I went to an Indian town about four leagues from this, where I found abundance of stone near the sea . . . from appearances there is a large quantity, but not enough to make a great fortress." If this had been the first knowledge the Spaniards had of the existence of this stone in Florida, it seems incredible that the Governor would have waited three years before reporting it.

THE SPRING

Shortly after his purchase of the property, in 1868, Williams decided to build a residence. He employed a local mason, Benjamin Pacetti, to build the stone foundation for this house. Pacetti sent his son, also named Benjamin, to mix mortar for this stone work. The young Benjamin began looking for the spring he knew was there. Williams asked him what he was looking for. He replied, "The spring." Williams told him he had filled it up; then showed him the approximate location and the boy cleaned out the spring.[11]

9. Chatelain, *Defenses of Spanish Florida*, p. 130, n. 6: "The native Indian tribes had knowledge of it [coquina] at an early date, but apparently they rarely used it, mainly because they lacked the skill, as well as the proper tools to quarry and move the stone. The same kind of difficulty prevented its early use by the Spaniards (Geiger, *Franciscan Conquest*, p. 166)."

10. *Plan de Port de St. Augustin dans la Florida*, Bellin, Jacques Nicolas: *La Petit Atlas Maritime*, Vol. I, No. 39. Also Bellin's *Description Geographique* . . . Versailles. 1773, pp. 123-133, drawn about 1764.

11. Affidavit of Benjamin Pacetti, March 17, 1928, in collection of Walter B. Fraser.

Photograph of Dr. Louella Day MacConnell in her residence on Fountain of Youth grounds.

Williams left the spring open, and later had its sides walled up with coquina stones, which gave it its present form.[12]

THE PROPERTY PURCHASED BY MR. AND MRS. EDWARD MacCONNELL

In 1900 Williams sold the Fountain of Youth property to Edward MacConnell, a mining engineer, and his wife, Dr. Louella Day MacConnell, who had come to St. Augustine from Alaska.[13]

12. Affidavit of Gabriel Peter Gomez, March 8, 1934, states that about 1875 his father was employed by Williams to build up the side walls. Photostatic copy in collection of Walter B. Fraser.

13. *The Tattler* (a periodical published in St. Augustine at that time), issue of January 27, 1900: copy in St. Augustine Historical Society Library.

Full size drawing of "Silver Casque" by Goold T. Butler, Civil Engineer. The original was five inches in height.

After purchasing the property, the MacConnells returned to Alaska, where Edward MacConnell had large business interests. **Dr. Louella Day MacConnell, who was a physician and surgeon,**[14] **came back to St. Augustine and maintained her residence here for the remainder of her life.**

In 1923 a systematic collection of samples of water in Florida was made under direction of the State Board of Health. These samples were sent to the United States Geological Survey, Washington, D. C., for analyses, the results being published by the United States Printing Office in 1928. The Fountain of Youth spring is listed in this publication as follows: "**No. 374 St. Augustine, Spring owned by Mrs. L. M. Day, Oct. 24, 1923.**" It is the only spring listed as sampled in St. Johns County. The analysis given for this spring, as compared with those for three St. Augustine artesian wells, shows that the water of the spring is considerably different from that of the wells, and that it is not surface water.[15]

THE SILVER SALT CELLAR

In October, 1904, Dr. Louella Day MacConnell discovered a small silver container, buried in the ground near the spring. In this container was a piece of parchment on which there was writing in Spanish. Her professional training restrained Dr. MacConnell from giving any publicity to her find at that time. Instead, at her first opportunity, which came four years later, she went to Spain where, in the General Archives of the Indies, in Seville, she made as extensive investigations as time would permit. She also arranged to have officially certified copies of documents relating to Ponce de León sent to her at St. Augustine, leaving money for continuation of research. [16] We will give further consideration to this silver container, and the parchment contained in it, later in this brochure. We now return to the coquina cross.

SECOND UNCOVERING OF THE COQUINA CROSS

The existence of the cross at the Fountain of Youth was a matter of local knowledge at the time the MacConnells purchased the property.[17]

14. Graduate of College of Physicians and Surgeons, Keokuk, Iowa, class of 1886.
15. *Chemical Character of Waters of Florida*, by W. D. Collins and C. S. Howard. U. S. Geological Survey, Water-Supply Paper 596-G., pp. 226-27.
16. Original correspondence in possession of Helen Hunt West, Attorney at Law, Jacksonville, Florida, Dr. MacConnell's executrix. Photographic copies in collection of Walter B. Fraser. The Spanish documents obtained are listed in Lawson, *Discovery of Florida, etc.*, pp. 58-71.

It seems evident that Dr. Louella Day MacConnell saw part of the cross, in 1904, when she found the silver salt cellar, for her affidavit, made November 15, 1912, states: "This inscription was found sealed in a Silver Casque buried in a Coquina Cross near a fountain in St. Augustine, Oct., 1904."[18]

However, it was not until she returned from Spain, convinced of the authenticity of the relics, that Dr. MacConnell gave her find publicity.

On April 13, 1909, John Henry Lee, a colored workman, removed the stump of a large palmetto palm tree which, in the course of many years, had grown up above the cross, reached maturity and died. With this obstacle out of the way, the entire cross was uncovered. It is a Latin cross consisting of twenty-seven pieces of coquina stone so arranged that, by counting the center stone each way, there are 15 stones in the staff and 13 in the cross beam, thus signifying the year 1513 in which it was planted. The staff of the cross lies on an East to West line, that is "with the rising and setting of the Sun," as described on the parchment found in the silver container. As soon as the cross was entirely uncovered it was photographed by W. J. Harris, a local photographer and publisher of picture post cards.[19]

The local newspaper, issue of April 19, 1909, carried an account of the uncovering of the cross, from which the following quotation is taken: "Mrs. MacConnell recently discovered a coquina cross, placed by Ponce de León to mark the spot where he found a spring of fresh water. The cross is about five feet long and about four crossways. It was built apparently in the ground . . . The cross is undoubtedly a genuine relic of the earliest days of St. Augustine's history . . ."[20]

A more extensive, illustrated account is given in the Florida Review (cited in note 19). There is a discrepancy in the dimensions

17. Fraser vs. Curtis Publishing Co., 1730-J-Civil. Deposition of Dr. Verne E. Chatelain, October 8, 1951, p. 25: "I could state certainly that it [the cross] was there at the time Dr. Day [MacConnell] came to St. Augustine which according to my memory was about the turn of the century, about 1900. . . . The cross then was already a matter of local interest and local knowledge. It was on the grounds near the spring, and the evidence and the local interest in it indicates both the Fountain of Youth and the cross were there earlier than 1900."

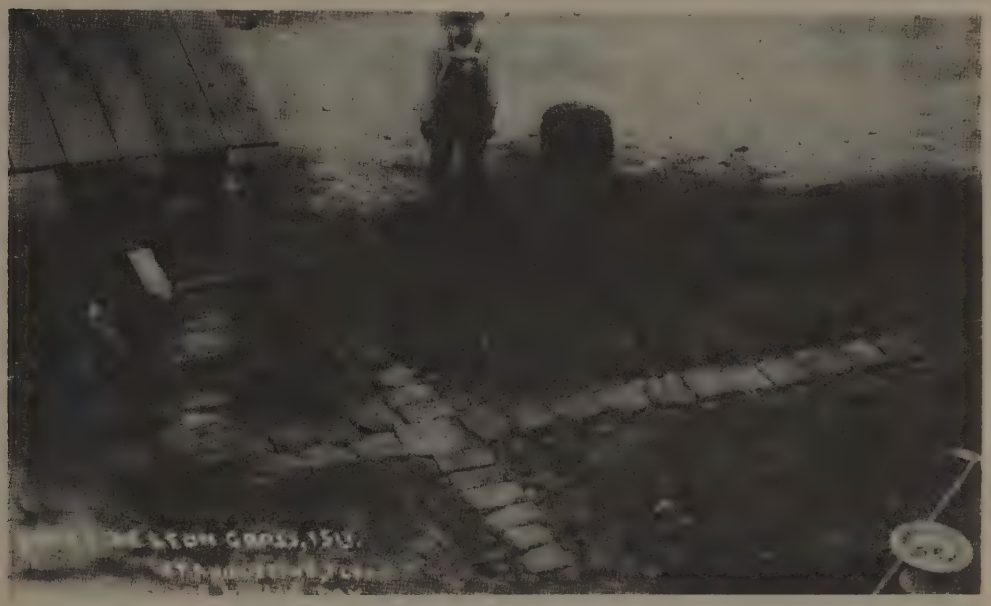
18. Affidavit on Mrs. Annie Averette's transcription and translation of parchment, made before John R. Cooper, County Judge. Photographic copy in collection of Walter B. Fraser.

19. This photograph is reproduced in *Florida Review*, October, 1909. Copy in Jacksonville, Florida, Public Library.

20. *The St. Augustine Evening Record*, April 19, 1909. Photostatic copy in collection of Walter B. Fraser.

of the cross between those given in the newspaper in April and those given by the magazine in October. The magazine writer states the cross is "about 14 feet long, 8 feet across the arms," which seems a closer approach to the size as shown by the Harris photograph. The cross remains today in the spot where it was first discovered. It is 14 feet long and 9½ feet wide.

Dr. MacConnell built a curbing around the cross to preserve it. This later caused circulation of rumors that she had built the cross itself. An illustration in an old, but undated, booklet of St. Augustine views shows the cross with this curbing.[21]



THE CROSS AT FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH
Reproduction from a photograph taken by W. J. Harris at the time the cross was uncovered in April, 1909.

A map titled *La Florida,* drawn by the Spanish cosmographer Hieron Chiaves, prior to 1565, shows "C. de Cruz" [Cape of Cross] on the Florida east coast, which checks with Herrera's statement for the vicinity in which Ponce de León first landed. Other names which the Herrera account mentions as having been given by Ponce de León also appear on this map, such as Bahama, Martyres, Tortugas, etc.[22]

21. Copy of booklet in Walter B. Fraser Collection.
22. This map was published in the *Atlas Teatro de la Tierra Universal*, by Abram Ortelio, as Map No. 8 in the first Spanish edition of this work, printed in Antwerp, 1588. It is reproduced in *History of Florida*, Henry Gardner Cutler; The Lewis Publishing Co., N. Y., 1923, vol. I, p. 25. A reproduction was recently published by the Geographical and Historical Service of the Spanish Army, Madrid, Spain, as No. 47 in a large collection of maps of the Americas.

Reproduction of illustration from old souvenir booklet, showing cross at Fountain of Youth with enclosing curb.

THE PARCHMENT

So much of the Spanish writing on the parchment (found in the silver container) as could be read was copied by Mrs. Annie Averette who, in 1912, was Spanish teacher in the St. Augustine public schools, and a translation was made by her. This copy and translation was sworn to before John R. Cooper, County Judge, St. Johns County, Florida, on November 15, 1912.[23] The Spanish text as copied by Mrs. Averette is as follows:

"Sépase por esto que yo, Alonzo Soriano, vecino y residente del Brillar subscribo y certifico que estuve presente al principio de la fundacion, la cual es la religion, y es con la salida y la puesta del Sol. Por órden de la Real Corona de Aragon hizo su descripcion al-Manantial el cual es bueno y dulce al gusto. Era en el año 1513."

Mrs. Averette translated this: "Be it known by this, that I, Alonzo Soriano, shareholder and resident of Brillar, contributed and certify to the public that I was present at the beginning of the foundation, which is the religion, and is with the rising and setting of the Sun. By order of the Royal Crown of Aragon he made his description at the Fountain which is good and sweet to the taste. It was in the year 1513."

There are certain anomalies in this translation, which will be discussed later in this brochure.

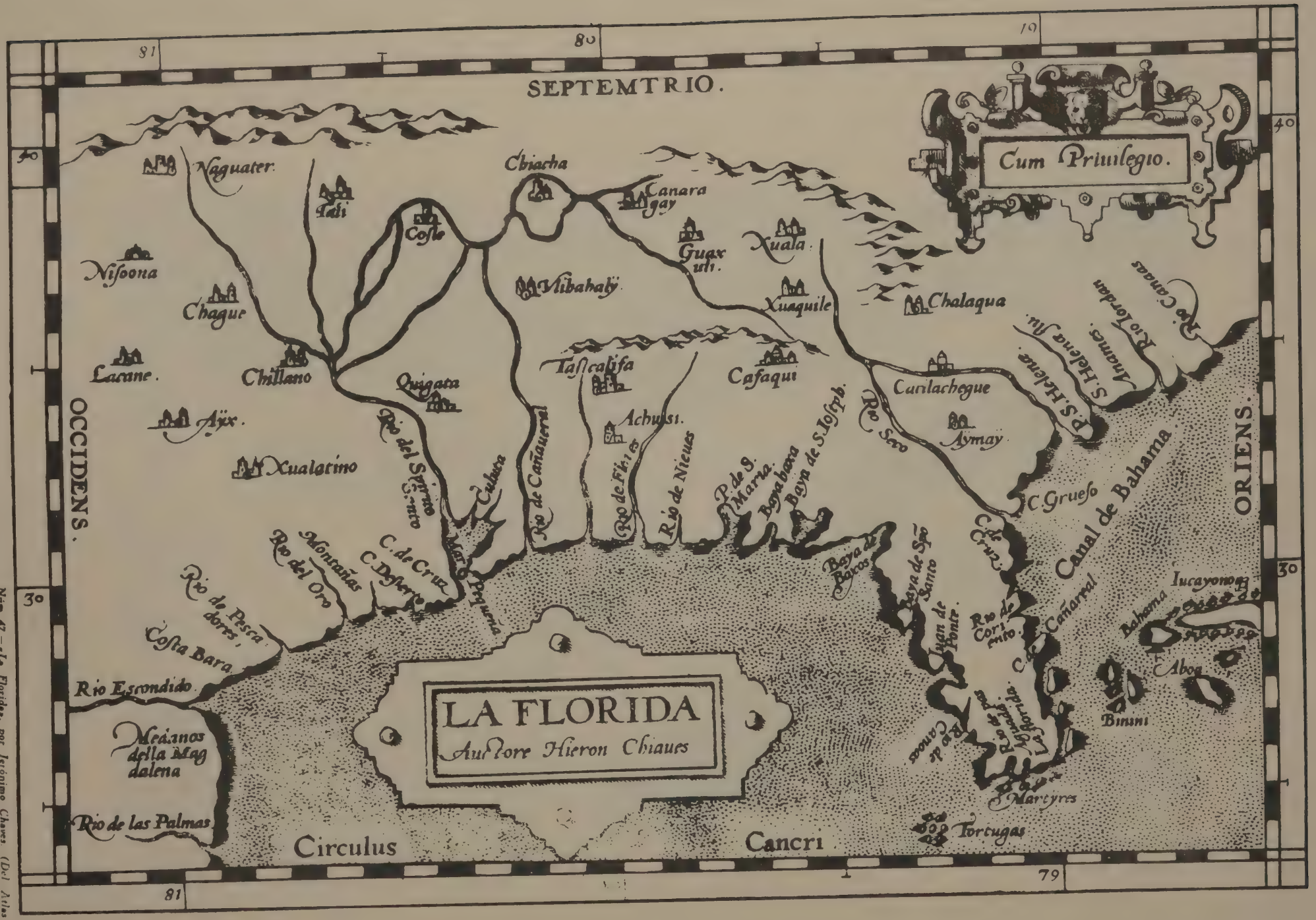
RESULTS OF RECENT INVESTIGATIONS

In all her references to the silver container which Dr. MacConnell found buried at the Fountain of Youth, she refers to it as a "casque" (casket). She was of the opinion that the embossed figures on it represented the landing of Ponce de León. The question arises: Is there any evidence that Ponce de León had a silver container of this sort?

On August 12, 1512, a license was issued permitting the export from Spain of a silver salt cellar for Juan Ponce de León.[24] As Ponce de León did not sail on his voyage of discovery until March 3, 1513, six months after the issuance of this license, there would have been ample time for this silver salt cellar to reach him before he set sail.

23. Photographic copy in collection of Walter B. Fraser.

24. Archivo General de Indias 139-1-5-libro 4, folio 13. Certified official copy in collection of Walter B. Fraser.



Núm. 47.—«La Florida», por Jerónimo Chaves. (Del Atlas «Theatro de la Tierra Universal», de A. Ortelio.)—Hacia 1565.—Servicio Geográfico del Ejército.

The Chiaves Map "La Florida" drawn before 1565. Showing "C. de Cruz" (Cape of Cross) on east coast of Florida in the vicinity where Ponce de León first landed. Taken from a reproduction made by the Geographic Service of the Spanish Army.

The original silver container found by Dr. MacConnell is no longer available. It becomes necessary to establish that it existed in her possession.

In a deposition made March 14, 1951, John L. Fletcher, then 74 years old, testified that he came to St. Augustine about 40 years previously (i.e., about 1911); that he worked at the Fountain of Youth for about five years, it was known by that name when he worked there for Dr. MacConnell, that he had seen the "Silver Casque" in her possession and had been told that when it was found it contained a piece of parchment.[25]

A full size drawing of the "Silver Casque," made by Goold T. Butler, Civil Engineer, in 1910, is in the collection of Walter B. Fraser; together with two of the metal reproductions of it which Dr. MacConnell had made and which were sold as souvenirs at the Fountain of Youth.

A photostatic copy of the Butler drawing was submitted to Don Diego Bermúdeb Camacho, Secretary of the General Archives of the Indies, Seville, Spain, and his opinion asked on what the object was and what the decoration on it represented. In his reply Don Diego stated: **"In regard to the drawing of the salt cellar, in my modest opinion it is an allegory of the discovery of America by Columbus on stepping on American land. Columbus is the personage with the beard, the Indian one who comes out to receive him, and the standard with the cross represents the taking possession of those lands in the name of Spain."**[26]

As Ponce de León had been a companion of Columbus, it seems appropriate that he should have a salt cellar decorated with this allegory. A photostatic copy of the Butler drawing was submitted to Dr. Francisco Aguilera, Acting Director Hispanic Section, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., who concurred with Don Diego's opinion that the object was a salt cellar and the decoration on it an allegory of the landing of Columbus.

25. Fraser vs. Curtis Publishing Co., 1730-J-Civil. Deposition of John L. Fletcher.

26. Letter from Don Diego Bermúdez Camacho to Edward W. Lawson, dated Seville, Spain, March 26, 1954. Photographic copy in collection of Walter B. Fraser. The Spanish text quoted is:

"En cuanto al dibujo del salero constituye para mi modesto entender una alegoria del descubrimiento de América por Colón al pisar tierra americana. Este Colón es el personaje de las barbas, el indio el que sale a recibirlo y el estandarte con la cruz representa la toma de posesión de aquellas tierras en nombre de España."

Replica of "Silver Casque" sold as souvenir at Fountain of Youth by Dr. Louella Day MacConnell.

THE AVERETTE TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION

These were first submitted to Edward W. Lawson, St. Augustine, Florida, who has had extensive experience in translation of old Spanish documents and books, and has been associated with the University of Florida Press in editing translations by others of material in this classification. Lawson's opinions follow:

1. There are no anachronisms in the Spanish text. The form is that usual for a witness making a deposition. The contract between Ponce de León and the Spanish crown required Ponce de León to take a *veedor* (i.e., a watcher or inspector) with him on this voyage.[27] I would say that Alonzo Soriano was that inspector.

2. From internal evidence the document could have been written only between the years 1506 and 1516. The phrase "Por orden de la Real Corona de Aragon" (By order of the Royal Crown of Aragon) indicates that possession was being taken for King Ferdinand in his own right a King of Aragon. From 1506 to 1516 Ferdinand was not king of Castile, but was acting as regent of that kingdom for his insane daughter Juana. Ponce de León was given an imperative order to come to Spain before he set sail on his voyage. It seems probable that he was then given instruction as to the form he should use in taking possession of any lands he might discover.[28]

3. There are anomalies in the Averette transcription and translation, particularly in the phrase "la cual es la religion, y es con la salida y la puesta del Sol." In my opinion, in the original this phrase was "la cual es la † de religion . . ." With this and other minor anomalies corrected, the translation would read: "Be it known by this that I, Alonzo Soriano, citizen and resident of Brillar, certify that I was present at the beginning of the foundation, which is the cross of religion, and it is with the rising and setting of the Sun. By order of the Royal Crown of Aragon, he made his design at the spring which is good and sweet to the taste. It was in the year 1513."

27. Archivo General de Indias, Seville. 139-1-4-libro 3, fols. 252-253v. "A los oficiales de la ysla de española sobre el asiento se ha de tomar con juan ponce . . . y debys enviar con él una persona con nombre de veedor . . ." (To the officials of the island of Española upon the agreement they must take with Juan Ponce . . . and ye shall send with him a person with the name of Inspector . . ."

28. Archivo General de Indias, Seville. 139-1-5-libro 4-fol. 5. "Juan Ponce de León para que luego que vea esta se venga para informar á S. A. de algunas cosas cumplideras á su servicio. Fecha en Burgos á 12 de Agosto de 1512." (Juan Ponce de León for that as soon as he sees this he come to inform His Highness of some things convenient to his service. Done in Burgos 12th of August, 1512.)

Sépase por esto que yo, Alonzo Soriano, ve-
-cino y residente del Brillar suscribo y cer-
-tifico al público que estuve presente al prin
-cipio de la fundacion, la cual es la reli-
-gion, y es con la salida y la puesta del
Sol. Por orden de la Real Corona de Ara-
-gon hizo su descripcion al manantial el
cual es bueno y dulce al gusto.

En [illegible] el año 1513.

This inscription was found sealed in a Silver Casque buried in a Coquina Cross near a [illegible] in St Augustine, Oct 1909. On the Silver Casque is engraved a picture representing Ponce de Leon discovering Florida

[illegible] 1912.
[illegible] Fla.

Jones Macdonell Dr. MacDonell

Be it known by this, that I, Alonzo Soriano,
shareholder and resident of Brillar, contri-
-buted and certify to the public that I
was present at the begining of the foun-
-dation, which is the religion, and is
with the rising and setting of the Sun.
By order of the Royal Crown of Aragon,
he made his discription at the fountain
which is good and sweet to the taste.
It was the year 1513.
I certify this to be a true translation Mrs. Averette

Spanish Transcription made from parchment found in "Silver Casque" and translation made by Mrs. Annie Averette. With statement by Dr. MacConnell sworn to before County Judge Cooper.

Fragment of parchment showing notary's filigrane at left and words corresponding to Mrs. Averette's transcription of Spanish words from parchment found in "Silver Casque."

OTHER OPINIONS OF THE AVERETTE TRANSLATION

A photograph of the Averette transcription and translation was sent to Don Diego Bermúdez Camacho, Secretary of the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, Spain (who is also one of the faculty of the Society of Archivists and Archaeologists), with a request that he supply an English translation. With respect to the anomalous phrase he wrote: **"I suggest that in the original document this phrase was 'de la cruz de religion' (of the religious cross; that is the Latin cross as used by the Roman Catholic Church."** In other respects his translation was identical with that made by Lawson.

The Averette transcription was then submitted to Dr. Federico de Onís, Professor-emeritus of the University of Salamanca, Spain, and of Columbia University, New York, who is recognized as one of the best authorities in the United States on the Spanish language of the period. He construed the translation exactly as had Bermúdez Camacho.[29]

29. Sworn statement by Bermúdez Camacho and letter by Professor Onís in collection of Walter B. Fraser.

THE FRAGMENT OF PARCHMENT

Among the things in Dr. Louella Day MacConnell's collection which came to the present owner with the purchase of the Fountain of Youth property was a fragment of parchment, measuring 9¼ by 2⅞ inches on which could bé faintly distinguished a notarial filigrane and a few words in old Spanish handwriting. This piece of parchment was photographed for Mr. Fraser at the U. S. Bureau of Standards, Washington, D. C., under special lighting which made additional words legible. A copy of this photograph was submitted to Professor Onís, who identified the handwriting as of the style in use during the early 16th century. A copy of the photograph was also submitted to Don Diego Bermúdez Camacho, who was asked to compare it with the Spanish transcription made by Mrs. Averette, to see if there was any relationship between them. Don Diego made the following comparison:

Words on parchment:

vezino . . . del Billar . . . Reyno de Aragon . . . Fué a quinientos . . . años

Words in Averette transcription:

vecino . . . del Brillar . . . Corona de Aragon . . . Era en el año 1513.

It is Don Diego's opinion that this parchment is the Notary's certification of the statement made by Alonzo Soriano as witness to the planting of a cross near a spring.[30]

The Library of Congress was asked to recommend two experts in identification of parchments and recommended Meta Harrsen of The Pierpont Morgan Library, 33 East 36th Street, New York, and Dorothy Miner of Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland. Their sworn statements follow:

"The document shown me this day by Mr. Walter B. Fraser of St. Augustine is written on velum and appears to be the notarial filigrane followed by largely effaced writing that customarily includes the notary's name, place of writing and date.

(signed) Meta Harrsen
Keeper of Manuscripts"

Sworn March 23, 1955

"The fragment of a Spanish document measuring 9¼ by 2⅞ inches shown me today by Senator Walter B. Fraser is inscribed on parchment, the inscription being on the inner side of the skin. Sworn March 22, 1955

(Signed) Dorothy Miner
Librarian and Keeper of Manuscripts"[31]

30. Letter from Professor Onís and sworn statement by Don Diego Bermúdez Camacho in collection of Walter B. Fraser.

31. Notarized statements in collection of Walter B. Fraser.

SUMMARY

1. The only detailed account of the voyage of Juan Ponce de León which resulted: a) in the first documented possession taken of any part of North America for a European Nation; b) in the naming of the place of discovery "La Florida", is the account given by the Spanish historiographer Antonio de Herrera.

2. The Herrera account places Ponce de León's ships at N. latitude 30°-08′, a league from the coast, on April 2, 1513.

3. Correction of this observation, for error in almanac, places the true position of the ships nine nautical miles farther south as shown on modern charts. At this corrected position the present St. Augustine harbor would be in plain sight.

4. The ships left the observation location "seeking harbor" and anchored that night "close to land."

5. The name "La Florida" was given to the place of discovery on April 2, 1513.

6. The name "La Florida" was used, for many years, by Spaniards as the name for present St. Augustine Inlet. It was never used as a local name for any other place on the Atlantic coast.

7. Ponce de León's ships remained at his first landing place for five days. They would not have been left that long "close to land" on the ocean coast where the first strong wind would have wrecked them. Consequently, it may be assumed that they were brought into the harbor.

8. Ponce de León landed on April 3, 1513, to "take information and possession." The logical place to do this would be at the nearest Indian village.

9. The nearest Indian village was on the present Fountain of Youth grounds. The reason for the Indians locating their village there was the existence of a spring of fresh water.

10. As the expedition had not taken on fresh water since leaving San Salvador, it may be assumed that Ponce de León drank from this spring and that the casks on his ships were filled from it. Also, that he would take possession in the vicinity of the spring, it being a good landmark.

11. It was customary for Spaniards to plant a cross when taking possession of new lands.

12. The Chiaves Map, drawn prior to the founding of St. Augustine, shows Cape of Cross at the latitude given by Herrera.

13. In the five days which Ponce de León remained at his first landing place, there would have been ample time to bring pieces of coquina with which to build a cross.

14. The description of St. Augustine Inlet, written by Bellin about 1764, shows there were prominent deposits of coquina on both sides of the channel by which Ponce de León entered the harbor.

15. In 1868 H. H. Williams discovered a coquina cross near the Fountain of Youth spring and covered it up.

16. The existence of this cross was well known locally when Dr. Louella Day MacConnell and her husband bought this property in 1900.

17. In October, 1904, Dr. MacConnell discovered a silver salt cellar, buried near the cross, which contained a parchment on which was written the statement of a witness to the planting of the cross in 1513.

18. Ponce de León was licensed to export a silver salt cellar from Spain to Puerto Rico in 1512.

19. Ponce de León's contract, with Ferdinand, required him to take a witness with him.

20. It was customary for Spanish explorers to take a notary with them. The fragment of parchment in Mr. Fraser's possession is evidently torn from the bottom of the witness' statement and is the notary's certification of it.

21. On April 13, 1909, the stump of a large palmetto palm tree which had grown up over the cross was removed and the entire cross uncovered. The size of the stump shows that it had been there for many years.

22. As soon as the cross was entirely uncovered it was photographed. The photograph shows the cross surrounded by small pieces of stone, indicating that the stones were brought to the site and there shaped.

23. The uncovering of the cross was reported in the local newspaper, on April 19, 1909, and the relics were then considered genuine.

24. The cross remains near the Fountain of Youth spring, in the spot where it was first discovered and lies with its staff in an East-West line, i.e., "with the rising and setting of the Sun," as described in Alonzo Soriano's statement.

The cross near the Fountain of Youth spring.

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